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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2008

In Today's Papers

Turkey Seeks Files from Germany regarding Deniz Feneri Fraud
Hurriyet, Milliyet, Vatan, Radikal and Cumhuriyet report Ismail Buyukkilic, the Turkish notary public who notarized fake documentation for the Germany-based Turkish charity Deniz Feneri official Mehmet Gurhan, was linked to the ruling AKP. The fake document authorizes the Islamist Kanal 7 TV president Zekeriya Karaman to deal with Gurhan's assets in Turkey. It was issued on behalf of Gurhan while he was still in prison in Germany for the embezzlement of donations collected by Deniz Feneri. Buyukkilic tried to run for parliament on the AKP ticket in Istanbul during the July 22 general elections last year. His brother is the AKP mayor of Melikgazi town in Kayseri. Papers report the Justice Ministry and the Turkish Union of Notaries were investigating the authorization in question. Papers also report the Ankara prosecutor's office was preparing to ask the German court in Frankfurt for more information about the Deniz Feneri fraud case. The German court announced during the verdict that those responsible for the scandal were hiding in Turkey.

On the other hand, AKP deputy chairman Dengir Mir Mehmet Firat and CHP deputy group chief Kemal Kilicdaroglu will fire accusations at each other in a face-to-face debate under the roof of the parliament today. The debate, to be televised, will be moderated by a prominent journalist, Star TV anchorman Ugur Dundar. Firat and Kilicdaroglu are planning to debate after a duel of words last week regarding allegations of the AKP's involvement in Deniz Feneri scandal in Germany. On Wednesday, Parliament Speaker Koksal Toptan urged the two politicians to not hold their debates on television, but to settle disagreements at court.

Warning against Corruption from MUSIAD
Hurriyet, Vatan, Cumhuriyet, Radikal, Zaman and others: Mainstream Hurriyet reports that The Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association (MUSIAD), known for its close relationship to the AKP government, visited PM Erdogan yesterday and presented him with a report advising Erdogan on the Turkish Economy during the global economic crisis. Mainstream Vatan says the report, "asked Erdogan to re-shuffle the cabinet, find more effective ways to deal

with corruption, stop fighting with the media and focus on the EU reforms."

Survey: 47.8 Percent Believe Erdogan Linked to Deniz Feneri Fraud
Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet carries the results of a public opinion survey conducted in September by the Political Research Strategy Development Center. According to the survey, 78.3 percent of Turkish people believe there were indiscretions in the Germany-based Islamist-oriented charity Deniz Feneri, while only 10.1 percent think there were no irregularities. Of those surveyed, 47.8 percent believe Prime Minister Erdogan was linked to the irregularities while 34.4 percent disagree. Another 64.9 percent say they do not believe that the AKP was investigating corruption cases. The survey carried results of interviews with 4,868 people in 16 cities.

'Ergenekon' Investigation

Media outlets report retired General Hursit Tolon, a suspect detained in the Ergenekon investigation, was taken to the hospital Wednesday and then returned to prison following medical checks. Tolon's lawyer asked for Tolon's release due to blood pressure and immune system problems. Islamist-oriented Zaman, carries the front page headline, "Ergenekon Suspects Seek Release from Prison through Hospital Transfers."

In a related story, the latest detentions in the Ergenekon case include former police officer Adil Serdar Sacan, former mayor of Istanbul's Esenler neighborhood Gurbuz Capan, retired Colonel Tanju Guvendi, and leftist-nationalist journalist Tuncay Ozkan. Ozkan's lawyer told the press yesterday Ozkan was charged with membership to

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an illegal organization.

Editorial Commentary on Democracy-Political Debates/Ergenekon Case

Turker Alkan wrote in liberal-intellectual Radikal: "Recent events show that Turkish democracy is unique and one of a kind. This is a country where the PM launches war against the media. Here in Turkey, intellectuals, writers and artists are detained without being told the charges against them. There are 850 web sites that are banned in Turkey, which indicates that we have the freedom to live under the government's bans. Turkey's level of internet freedom is akin to Iran, Saudi Arabia and Zimbabwe. I wonder whether we will realize the fact that freedom is a comprehensive concept. Freedom is not only about the freedom to wear the headscarf."

Ali Bayramoglu wrote in Islamist-leaning Yeni Safak: "Turkey's intellectuals, opinion makers, bureaucrats and politicians have always sought to preserve institutional honor. Especially where crimes related to public or official institutions are concerned, certain red lines are not crossed. For the first time, a prosecutor [i.e. the Ergenekon prosecutor] has dared to fight the ongoing unspoken rule of silence. But this is not enough unless the media, military and politicians clean their own houses. I think the Ergenekon case will pave the way for this process to start."

Yavuz Donat wrote in mainstream Sabah: "Ancient Romans enjoyed watching fights between two gladiators. Witnessing the blood of human killings increased the cheers and pleased the audiences immensely. While centuries have passed by, unfortunately, in some countries people still witness fights similar to those among gladiators in ancient Rome. There will be a verbal struggle between the AKP's Firat and the CHP's Kilicdaroglu today, very much like a verbal gladiator battle. I hope the public will boycott this debate. Unfortunately, vicious arguments are a vital part of our political culture and politicians in Turkey gain many supporters through fighting."

Huseyin Gulerce wrote in Islamist-oriented Zaman: "TGS did not object to retired generals and lieutenants taken into custody under the Ergenekon investigation. The military is cleansing itself and has discouraged those who might attempt to take a path outside the law. It has, in a way, announced that unlawfulness would not be tolerated. The public wholly supports this attitude. However, we

are concerned the military will try to redefine 'politics' and continue intervening in the will of the people."

Cartoon in today's mainstream Milliyet:

PM Erdogan is depicted shouting "Here comes Ergenekon," while he is on top of a Lighthouse ("Deniz Feneri" in Turkish) that is labeled with a Kanal 7 TV sign. The lighthouse is next to AKP office, and piles of "aid money" sacks are seen stuffed in the windows of the lighthouse. Meanwhile, the public incredulously watches the scene unfold.

Organizations' Declaration for Free Press

Hurriyet, Aksam, Sabah, Zaman, Milliyet and Cumhuriyet highlight a joint declaration issued by Turkey's main and leading professional press institutions. A total of 11 press bodies convened to address Prime Minister Erdogan's recent call to boycott media outlets who report on the irregularities in the Deniz Feneri case. Orhan Erinc, Chairman of the Turkish Journalists' Association (TGC), called for freedom of expression across the board and emphasized the importance of a free press as well as union rights at media outlets. The joint declaration was signed by 11 domestic press-related institutions, including the Press Senate, the Press Institute Association, the Contemporary Journalists Association and the European Journalists' Union.

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Only One Bidder for Turkey's Fourth Nuclear Tender

Hurriyet, Radikal, Sabah, Milliyet, Vatan: Today's papers report that only one company offered a bid in the fourth tender opened for the construction and operation of Turkey's first nuclear power plant in Mersin-Akkuyu. The lone bidder consortium included Russia's Atomstroy Export and Inter Rao, along with Turkish company Park Teknik. Mainstream Milliyet describes the bidding as "a fiasco" while Sabah notes that the tender was held despite requests for postponement.

Iran and Russia Stir the Pot at the UN

Coverage of the UN General Assembly Meetings focuses on Iranian President Ahmadinejad's antics and Russia's refusal to join the Iran meetings. Mainstream Milliyet quotes from the Iranian President's speech in its banner headline, "The End of the American Empire is Getting Close." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports, "The American Empire is crumbling," as the Iranian President "targets the U.S. and Israel during his speech at the UN General Assembly." In a related article, Cumhuriyet reports, "Russia Boycotted the Iran Meeting," and notes, "this strikes another blow to tensions that have increased between the U.S. and Russia over Georgia." Liberal Radikal reports, "Traditional Quarrels at the U.N. Podium," as "Moscow boycotts the Iran nuclear meeting because of criticism from Bush and Sarkozy regarding Georgia," while "Ahmadinejad blasts Obama, Peres, and the Jewish lobby." Islamist-oriented Zaman carries one of Ahmadinejad's quotes from his television interview with CNN's Larry King as a headline, "Why Didn't Europe Give Alaska to the Jews?" The article notes Ahmadinejad criticized Europe for "resettling Jews in Palestine" after World War II by saying, "Why were the Palestinians victimized? Why couldn't Europe give the Jews some other land, like Alaska?"

Bryza: Russia is too weak for a New Cold War

Islamist-oriented Zaman reports U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs Matt Bryza spoke to Azerbaijan's ANS television station and said, "Russia violated international law when they invaded Georgia," but "Russia is too weak to start a new Cold War."

DHS Uses Mind-Reading Technology to Counter Terrorism

Mainstream Hurriyet reports the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is testing new technology that seeks to detect terrorist intentions among travelers in the U.S. The paper reports, "The U.S. will read the minds of terrorists," by using "The Detector of Bad Intentions." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet carries the headline, "They Will Read Human Minds," and calls the development "a move towards an Orwellian

society."

TV News:

NTV

Domestic News

- In an address to the European Parliament on Wednesday, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew said, "I have criticized EU countries for their hesitations about Turkey's EU membership, despite the fact that there are already many Muslims living in Europe."

- The latest annual world investment report from the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) says Turkey is the 23rd most preferred global location for direct foreign investment.

- Transsexual singer Bulent Ersoy appeared before court Wednesday on charges she "attempted to turn the public against compulsory military service."

International News

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- According to sources from the presidency who are attending UNGA meetings, Turkey will bring together the leaders of Pakistan and Afghanistan for talks in Istanbul in the next few months.

- The Iraqi Parliament approves legislation to hold local elections throughout Iraq, except in Kirkuk, Erbil, Dohuk, and Suleymaniye provinces.

- North Korea threatens to reactivate its nuclear reactor at Yongbyon.

WILSON